

imparting that beautiful finish and smoothness to wall and other papers of the best quality, which shows such great improvements in the modern age.

Home quotations for this article, in its crude state, is £50 per ton.

Asbestos.

This article has but limited demand. It is generally used for gas stoves. The home price is 2s. 6d. per lb.

Mica.

Mica is found widely distributed in our Province in granite, gneiss, and mica slate. Its usefulness, when found in large laminated plates, as a substitute for glass, or for the front of stoves. It is also used in the preparation of scaglioli, or imitation marbles, and in other works of art.

Having given an outline of the series of my exhibits, and I have shown what exceptional resources and facilities Nelson possesses for the development of these branches of trade, and now that new openings, both for capital and labour, are so urgently needed, I hope advantage will be taken, and to see both mining and other works taking their proper places as the leading local industries.

I feel that this paper on Nelson copper as an industry, would be incomplete without some mention of the Dun Mountain Mines, from which so much was expected, and in which so much capital was sunk. It is not my intention to animadvert upon the management of those mines; but when I allude to copper mining as a probable source of profitable industry here, I am compelled to state the reason why, hitherto, it has proved a failure. In the first place, the ground was never thoroughly explored. Shafts were sunk, varying from a few inches to about 30 feet at the most, and on this very insufficient examination, all was pronounced barren. Now, elsewhere, in copper mines, it is no unusual thing for shafts to be sunk to a depth of 500 feet, and even more. Ultimately, the error was discovered, but by that time the Company's capital was exhausted, and the works were necessarily discontinued. Hence, we have, within the last few weeks, seen the tramway from which so much was hoped, taken up; and even the very rails are being exported elsewhere. Thus the Dun Mountain failure must not be taken as any proof that Nelson copper mining is a delusion and a snare: rather that it should be used as a valuable lesson in future experience. That payable copper lodes exist can be proved beyond all possible doubt.

I will offer remarks which my experience suggest, on the very objectionable system obtaining in the formation and management of mining companies, to which their frequent failure is mainly owing. It is one great mistake in starting these companies, that persons are appointed amongst themselves to view and report upon the mine, whose usual avocations are in no way connected with mining. This is a serious error, when even the most practical mining surveyors and geologists, at times, are not correct in their estimation; much less, then, are likely to be reliable, persons practically ignorant of the matter. In mining, the unfortunate fatality hitherto attendant upon nearly all the public companies raised in New Zealand generally seems still to attend with its malignant influence. Mining industries have been, up to the present time, peculiarly unfortunate in most respects; and that the system is wrong which brings such invariable failure in so thoroughly legitimate a branch of industry, if properly conducted, as quartz and other mining, none can question. And should the few remarks here made induce more careful inquiry, the cause of failure will become apparent, and a remedy is easy to be found. I have stated quartz and other mining to be a legitimate investment, and under proper management, in most cases a very profitable one.

The system, as a rule, pursued to bring them under the notice of the public, is, in using the mildest term I can find, extremely reprehensible. The custom of handing over half the mine to the finders, and then paying them besides out of the funds of the company, is actually holding out a premium for imposition. The usual practice amongst the miners is either to put in a drive or to sink a shaft, and as soon as stone is struck containing gold or other metal (or even before, sometimes), a few specimens are taken and tested; all work suspended; protection applied for, and in most cases granted. An agent is appointed to endeavour to form a company; a glaring prospectus is issued, usually containing statements of a most absurd and exaggerated character, especially with regard to the crushing of a few pounds of exceptionally rich stone. The statements in the prospectus are generally believed, and after a most superficial inquiry, and in the majority of cases without any inquiry at all, the public subscribe their money liberally. Expensive machinery is bought and taken to the claim, often at an immense outlay of money, and when erected and made ready for work, in most cases we find the unfortunate shareholders astonished at the result and the extreme regularity of the calls; and, disgusted with the absence of dividends, loudly and justly proclaim mining a speculation. As a proof, I quote the statement of a prospectus which I hold:—

1. It states that the claim has yielded 900 ounces of specimen gold to one party.
2. It speaks of a well-defined reef, 12 feet thick, the gold being equally distributed throughout the stone. The mine can be worked at a comparatively trifling cost, one man, as has been proved, being able to excavate about five tons per day.
3. Three testimonials accompanying, gives evidence of the equal distribution of gold throughout the stone, at the rate of 4oz. 13dwt. 8gr. per ton.

Now, if one man has been proved able to excavate five tons per day, or to obtain the stone containing 23oz. 8dwt. 18gr. of gold, at 75s. per ounce, as given on the coast, the value of that man's labour would be £87 17s. 9d. per day.

4. The holders require, by this prospectus, £1,200 cash for work done: that is, making a tunnel of forty feet. To excavate five tons per day,—120 cubic feet,—would require ten days to put in the tunnel. The price quoted is £1,200 cash, or at the rate of £120 per day, which certainly is slightly above the average rate of wages in New Zealand at the present time. With these absurdities, the company is raised and registered. This is one example (and many similar I could give) as the cause of failure in mining companies.

Mining enterprise, especially when undertaken by diggers labouring under every conceivable disadvantage, should be liberally encouraged, and every possible facility should be afforded in roads,